

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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Sector Juneau

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16720
June 16, 2016

Scott Hartman, General Manager
Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company
P.O. Box 32199
Juneau, AK 99803-2199

Dear Mr. Hartman:

The purpose of this letter is to establish certain revised expectations as to the vessel type and specific guidelines for transit to and from the Greens Creek Mine facility in Hawk Inlet on Admiralty Island. Due to the countless variables that affect ship handling, including weight, hull type, propulsion type vessel size, and a multitude of weather and waterway factors, it is vital that distinct operating parameters are established. Particular to this area, the severe waterway constraints coupled with extreme tidal fluctuations present significant navigational challenges for vessels transiting Hawk Inlet.

As the Captain of the Port for Southeast Alaska, I am required to review and address potential risks to marine safety and the maritime environment. A vessel grounding in Hawk Inlet would be devastating to the surrounding environment and would severely restrict your mining operations. Therefore, I believe there needs to be a clear understanding by all parties as to what type and under what conditions deep draft vessels should make their transit. Rather than establish a Regulated Navigation Area, I recommend that you employ the guidelines below for the movement of all vessels to and from your facility:

All vessels shall be no more than 600 feet in length with a beam of not more than 100 feet. Vessels should transit Hawk Inlet within 60 minutes of slack water (before or after), in conditions of good visibility and good weather, and with an under keel clearance of not less than 6 feet.

To be clear, this letter is not regulatory in nature. Its purpose is to establish guidelines and expectations that are intended to assist pilots, bridge teams, vessel agents, and industry in reducing potential risk of vessel groundings in Hawk Inlet. The Coast Guard remains open to future evaluation of these guidelines, as warranted, due to improvements in technology, standard operating procedures, or the waterway itself.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, require further information, or wish to respond to this letter, please contact LT Kristi Sloane at (907) 463-2846 or e-mail at kristi.sloane@uscg.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. D. Greene".

S. D. GREENE
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Southeast Alaska

Copy: Southeast Alaska Pilots' Association
Marine Exchange of Alaska
North Pacific Maritime, Inc.